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#8 IN A NINE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
SECRET WARS II
THE BEYONDER--
BERSERK!

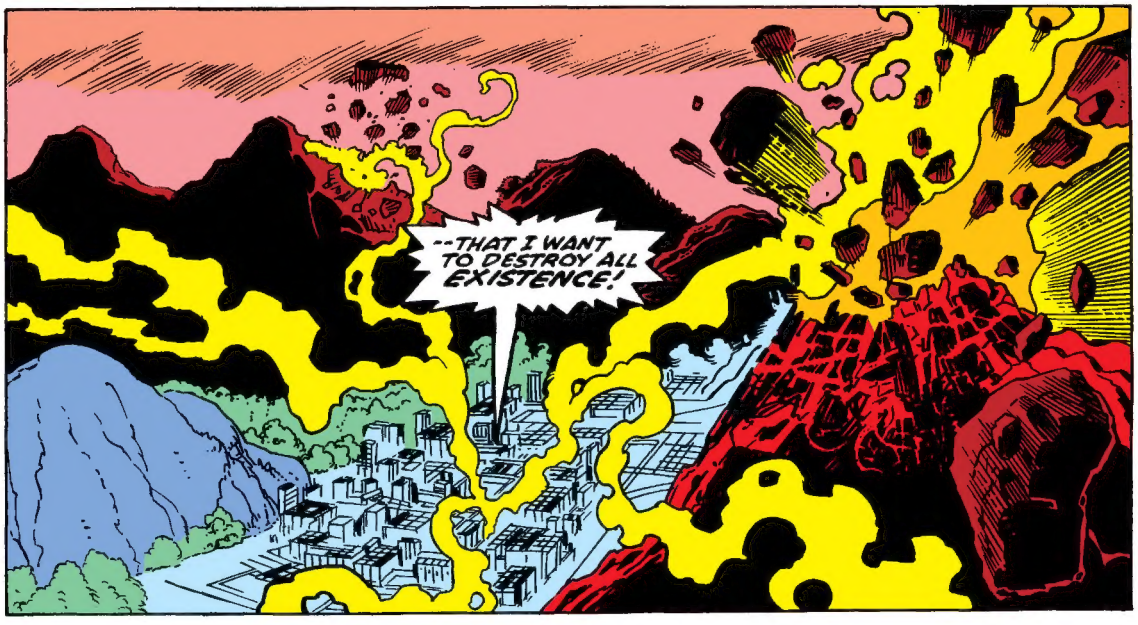
Beyond time, space, and the myriad dimensions lies another universe to which our own is as a droplet of water to the ocean. The One Who Is All in that other universe has learned of our universe and has come here to walk among us, that he might come to understand the essence of humanity.

The fragile Earth trembles beneath his feet, dreading his godlike omnipotence.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: SECRET WARS™ II

JIM SHOOTER SCRIPTER | AL MILGROM PENCILER | STEVE LEIALOHA INKER | ROSEN & PARKER LETTERS | CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORIST | BOB BUDIANSKY EDITOR

BETRAYAL!



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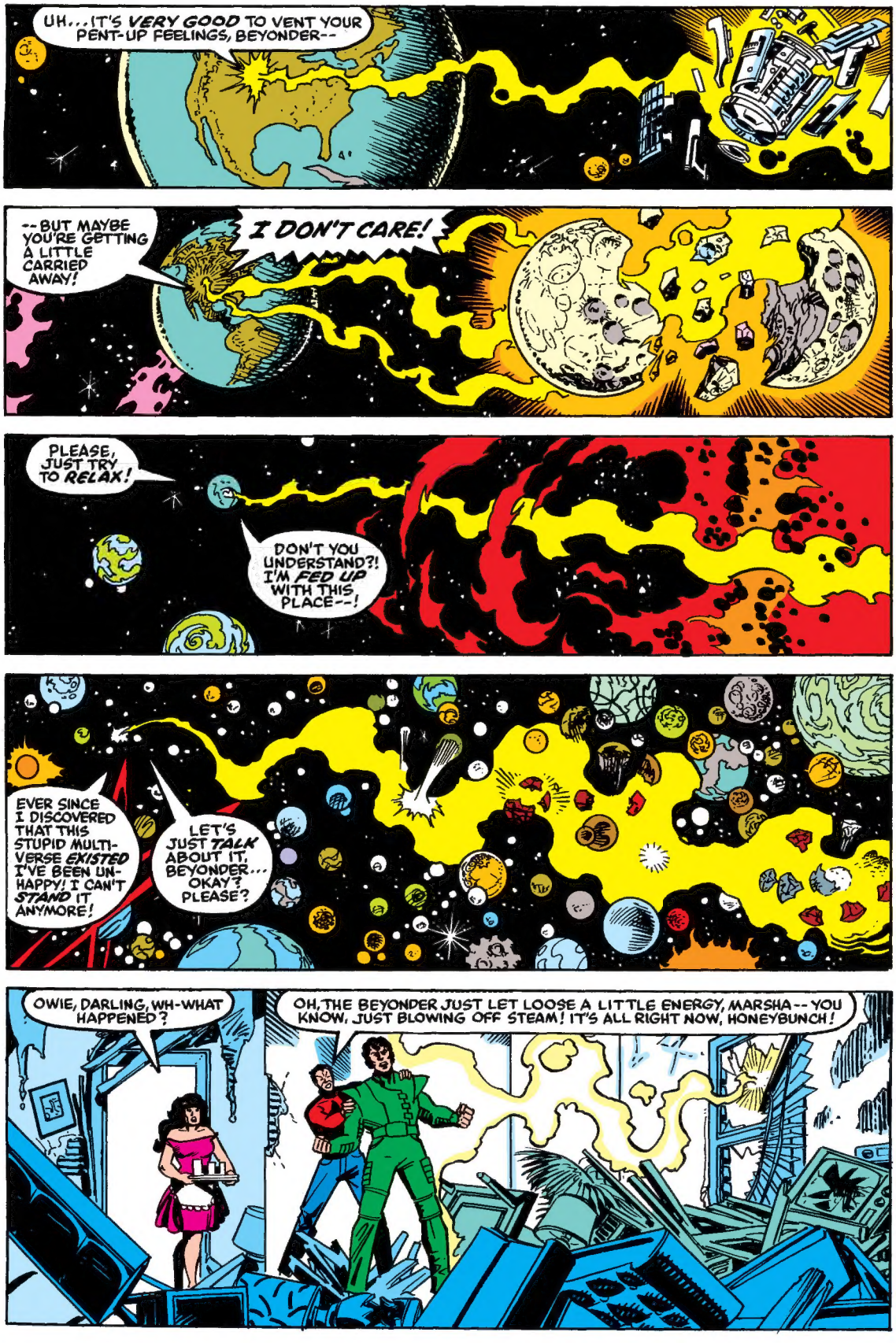
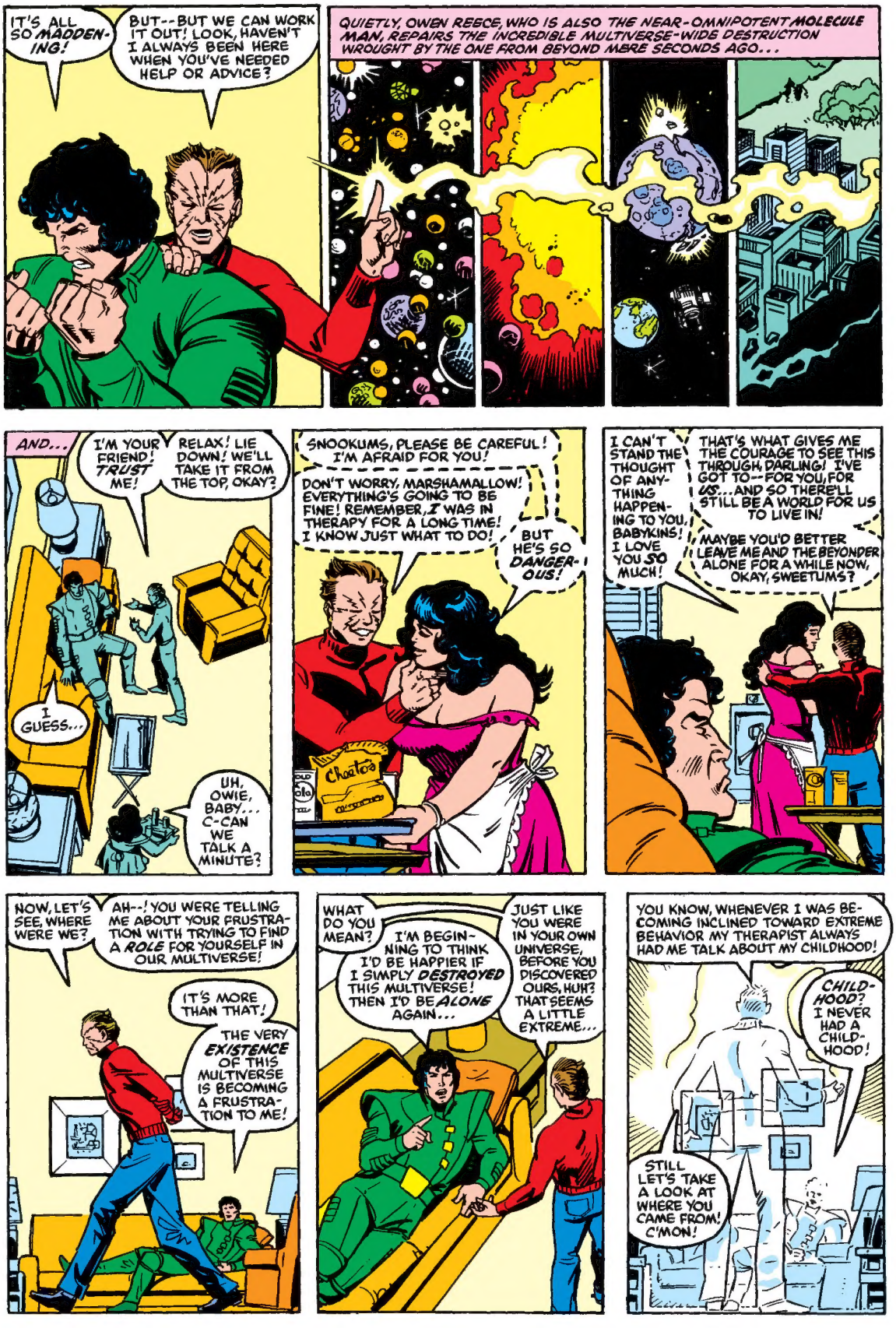
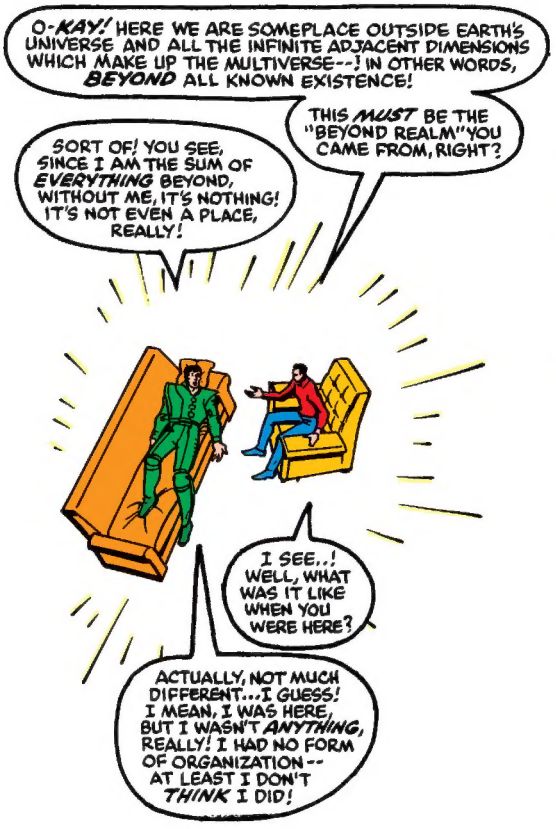
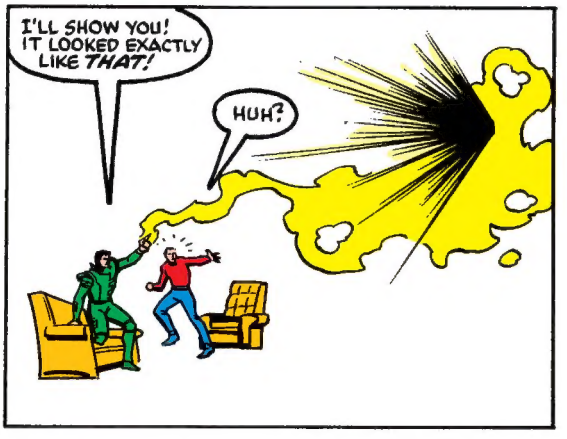

UH...IT'S VERY GOOD TO VENT YOUR PENT-UP FEELINGS, BEYONDER--
--BUT MAYBE YOU'RE GETTING A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY!
I DON'T CARE!
PLEASE, JUST TRY TO RELAX!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?! I'M FED UP WITH THIS PLACE--!
EVER SINCE I DISCOVERED THAT THIS STUPID MULTI-VERSE EXISTED I'VE BEEN UN-HAPPY! I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!
LET'S JUST TALK ABOUT IT, BEYONDER... OKAY? PLEASE?
OWIE, DARLING, WH-WHAT HAPPENED?
OH, THE BEYONDER JUST LET LOOSE A LITTLE ENERGY, MARSHA -- YOU KNOW, JUST BLOWING OFF STEAM! IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, HONEYBUNCH!


IT'S ALL SO MADDENING!
BUT--BUT WE CAN WORK IT OUT! LOOK, HAVEN'T I ALWAYS BEEN HERE WHEN YOU'VE NEEDED HELP OR ADVICE?
QUIETLY, OWEN REECE, WHO IS ALSO THE NEAR-OMNIPOTENT MOLECULE MAN, REPAIRS THE INCREDIBLE MULTIVERSE-WIDE DESTRUCTION WROUGHT BY THE ONE FROM BEYOND MERE SECONDS AGO...
AND...
I'M YOUR FRIEND! TRUST ME!
RELAX! LIE DOWN! WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THE TOP, OKAY?
I GUESS...
UH, OWIE, BABY... C-CAN WE TALK A MINUTE?
SNOOKUMS, PLEASE BE CAREFUL! I'M AFRAID FOR YOU!
DON'T WORRY, MARSHAMALLOW! EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE FINE! REMEMBER, I WAS IN THERAPY FOR A LONG TIME! I KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO!
BUT HE'S SO DANGEROUS!
I CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF ANYTHING HAPPENING TO YOU, BABYKINS! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!
THAT'S WHAT GIVES ME THE COURAGE TO SEE THIS THROUGH, DARLING! I'VE GOT TO--FOR YOU, FOR US...AND SO THERE'LL STILL BE A WORLD FOR US TO LIVE IN!
MAYBE YOU'D BETTER LEAVE ME AND THE BEYONDER ALONE FOR A WHILE NOW, OKAY, SWEETUMS?
NOW, LET'S SEE, WHERE WERE WE?
AH--! YOU WERE TELLING ME ABOUT YOUR FRUSTRATION WITH TRYING TO FIND A ROLE FOR YOURSELF IN OUR MULTIVERSE!
IT'S MORE THAN THAT!
THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THIS MULTIVERSE IS BECOMING A FRUSTRATION TO ME!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I'D BE HAPPIER IF I SIMPLY DESTROYED THIS MULTIVERSE! THEN I'D BE ALONE AGAIN...
JUST LIKE YOU WERE IN YOUR OWN UNIVERSE, BEFORE YOU DISCOVERED OURS, HUH? THAT SEEMS A LITTLE EXTREME...
YOU KNOW, WHENEVER I WAS BECOMING INCLINED TOWARD EXTREME BEHAVIOR MY THERAPIST ALWAYS HAD ME TALK ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD!
CHILDHOOD? I NEVER HAD A CHILDHOOD!
STILL LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT WHERE YOU CAME FROM! C'MON!


O-KAY! HERE WE ARE SOMEPLACE OUTSIDE EARTH'S UNIVERSE AND ALL THE INFINITE ADJACENT DIMENSIONS WHICH MAKE UP THE MULTIVERSE--! IN OTHER WORDS, BEYOND ALL KNOWN EXISTENCE!
THIS MUST BE THE "BEYOND REALM" YOU CAME FROM, RIGHT?
SORT OF! YOU SEE, SINCE I AM THE SUM OF EVERYTHING BEYOND, WITHOUT ME, IT'S NOTHING! IT'S NOT EVEN A PLACE, REALLY!
I SEE..! WELL, WHAT WAS IT LIKE WHEN YOU WERE HERE?
ACTUALLY, NOT MUCH DIFFERENT...I GUESS! I MEAN, I WAS HERE, BUT I WASN'T ANYTHING, REALLY! I HAD NO FORM OF ORGANIZATION -- AT LEAST I DON'T THINK I DID!

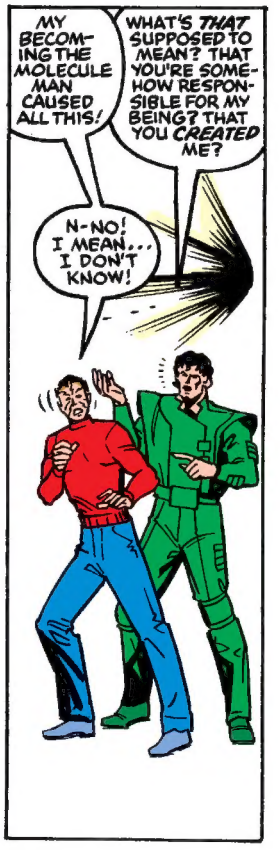
IT'S HARD TO SAY! I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH BEFORE THE EVENT!
THE EVENT THAT TIPPED YOU OFF THAT SOMETHING ELSE EXISTED BESIDES YOU..? WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

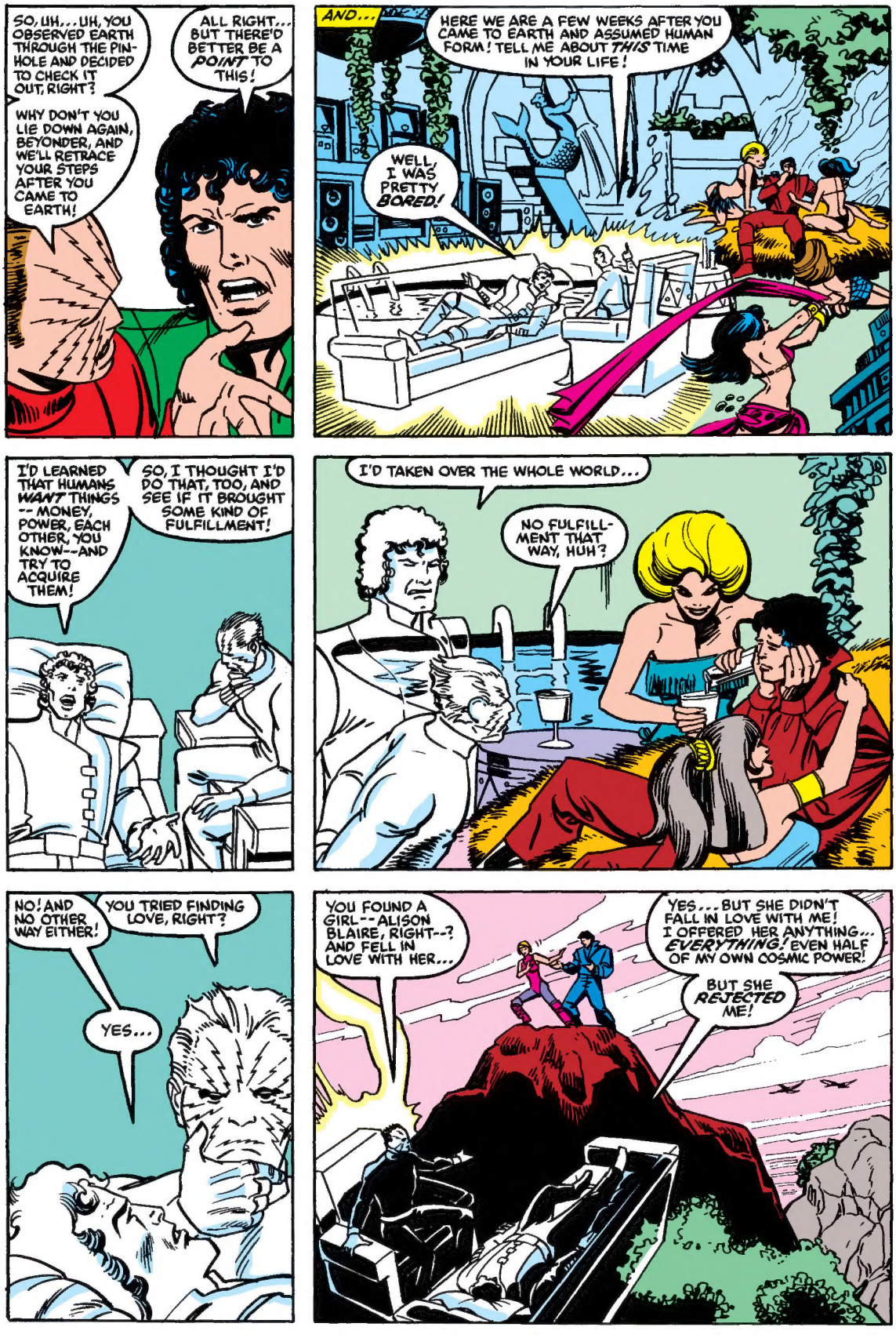

I'LL SHOW YOU! IT LOOKED EXACTLY LIKE THAT!
HUH?

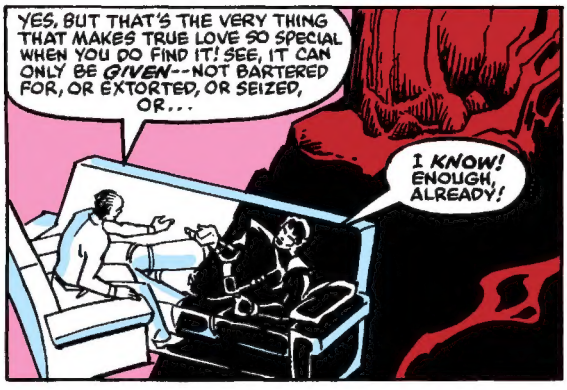
IT WAS A PINHOLE-- PROBABLY CAUSED BY SOME CATACLYSMIC HAPPENING IN YOUR MULTIVERSE!
AT FIRST, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT! AFTER A WHILE, I LOOKED THROUGH IT AND REALIZED THAT IT LED TO SOMEWHERE ELSE! LATER I LEARNED THAT "SOMEWHERE ELSE" WAS EARTH!
THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE WHEN IT HAPPENED, THOUGH, HUH? EXACTLY?

DOWN TO THE LAST PHOTON!
THEN, MAYBE IF I TAKE A CLOSE LOOK, I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT CAUSED IT!

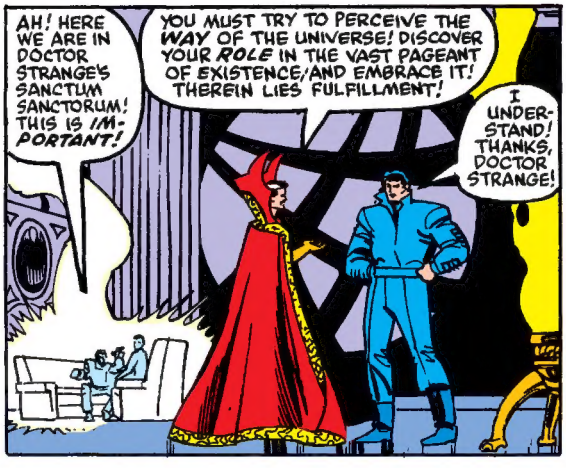
OH, MY GOSH!
THAT'S ME! THAT'S ME WHEN I HAD THE ATOMIC ACCIDENT THAT MADE ME THE MOLECULE MAN!
I'M THE CAUSE!


MY BECOMING THE MOLECULE MAN CAUSED ALL THIS!
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? THAT YOU'RE SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR MY BEING? THAT YOU CREATED ME?
N-NO! I MEAN... I DON'T KNOW!


SO, UH... UH, YOU OBSERVED EARTH THROUGH THE PIN-HOLE AND DECIDED TO CHECK IT OUT, RIGHT?
ALL RIGHT... BUT THERE'D BETTER BE A POINT TO THIS!
WHY DON'T YOU LIE DOWN AGAIN, BEYONDER, AND WE'LL RETRACE YOUR STEPS AFTER YOU CAME TO EARTH!
AND...
HERE WE ARE A FEW WEEKS AFTER YOU CAME TO EARTH AND ASSUMED HUMAN FORM! TELL ME ABOUT THIS TIME IN YOUR LIFE!
WELL, I WAS PRETTY BORED!
I'D LEARNED THAT HUMANS WANT THINGS -- MONEY, POWER, EACH OTHER, YOU KNOW--AND TRY TO ACQUIRE THEM!
SO, I THOUGHT I'D DO THAT, TOO, AND SEE IF IT BROUGHT SOME KIND OF FULFILLMENT!
I'D TAKEN OVER THE WHOLE WORLD...
NO FULFILL-MENT THAT WAY, HUH?
NO! AND NO OTHER WAY EITHER!
YOU TRIED FINDING LOVE, RIGHT?
YES...
YOU FOUND A GIRL--ALISON BLAIRE, RIGHT--? AND FELL IN LOVE WITH HER...
YES... BUT SHE DIDN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH ME! I OFFERED HER ANYTHING... EVERYTHING! EVEN HALF OF MY OWN COSMIC POWER!
BUT SHE REJECTED ME!


YES, BUT THAT'S THE VERY THING THAT MAKES TRUE LOVE SO SPECIAL WHEN YOU DO FIND IT! SEE, IT CAN ONLY BE GIVEN--NOT BARTERED FOR, OR EXTORTED, OR SEIZED, OR...
I KNOW! ENOUGH, ALREADY!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT LOVE OR ABOUT HER ANYMORE! WHO CARES WHAT SOME STUPID MORTAL FEMALE BLOT OF PROTOPLASM DESIRES...OR DOESN'T DESIRE? I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT!
OKAY, OKAY--! WE'LL GO ON!

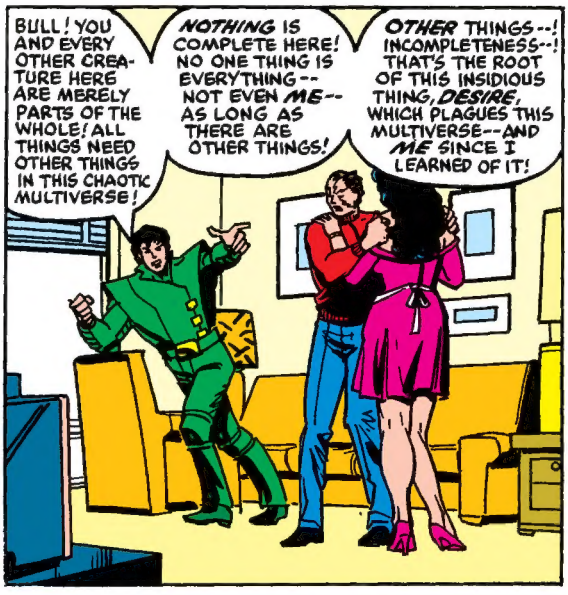

AH! HERE WE ARE IN DOCTOR STRANGE'S SANCTUM SANCTORUM! THIS IS IM-PORTANT!
YOU MUST TRY TO PERCEIVE THE WAY OF THE UNIVERSE! DISCOVER YOUR ROLE IN THE VAST PAGEANT OF EXISTENCE, AND EMBRACE IT! THEREIN LIES FULFILLMENT!
I UNDER-STAND! THANKS, DOCTOR STRANGE!

THAT WAS BALONEY! THERE IS NO ROLE FOR ME HERE! I TRIED TO FIT IN! IT'S USELESS!
I EVEN TRIED HELPING OTHERS TO FIND THEIR ROLES IN THE COSMIC SCHEME--FIGURING THAT MIGHT BE MY ROLE!
"THOSE WHO CAN, DO, THOSE WHO CAN'T, TEACH." HUH?
I WOULDN'T USE THAT SIMPLISTIC, STUPID HOMILY, BUT...

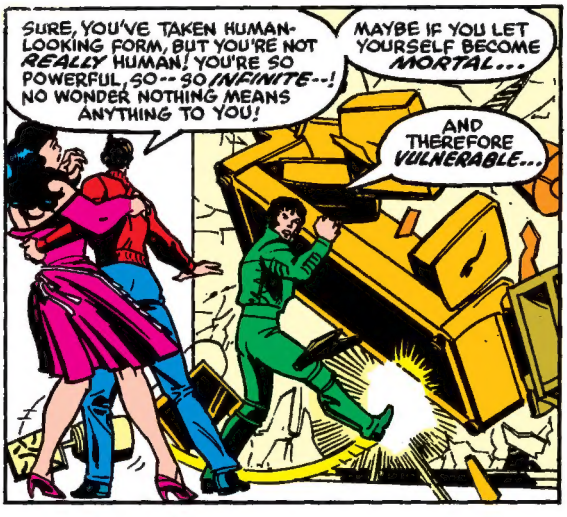
LET'S SEE HOW THAT WORKED OUT!
HMM... IS THIS A DISCO?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
WELL... I'D COME ACROSS THIS FELLOW--AN AMERICAN INDIAN--HE CALLED HIMSELF PUMA! I HELPED HIM DISCOVER HIS ROLE...
IMAGINE MY SUR-PRISE WHEN I REALIZED THAT HIS TRUE PURPOSE, THE DESTINY HE WAS FATED FOR, WAS TO DESTROY ME!
SO I THOUGHT, "NOW WHAT? DO I HAVE TO LET THIS GUY DESTROY ME TO FULFILL MY ROLE AS A TEACHER?"
FOR A MOMENT THERE, IT SEEMED LIKE HE REALLY MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE--!

--BUT SPIDER-MAN INTERVENED, DISTRACTING THE PUMA, SHAKING HIS CONFIDENCE FOR A SECOND!
THAT WAS ALL IT TOOK! SEE, IF THE PUMA REALLY HAD ANY CHANCE AT ALL, IT WAS JUST AT THAT ONE INSTANT WHEN ALL THE AXES OF EXISTENCE WERE PROPERLY ALIGNED AND THE ENTIRE POWER OF THE MULTIVERSE WAS BEING CHANNELED THROUGH HIM!
WHEN HE FINALLY STRUCK, IT WAS TOO LATE! THE MOMENT OF DESTINY HAD PASSED! HE COULDN'T HURT ME!
WOW! WERE YOU SCARED?
NO! I WAS CONVINCED--! CONVINCED THAT MY QUEST WAS A WASTE OF TIME--
--JUST LIKE THIS IS! LET'S GO BACK!
AND...
BABY-PIE! YOU'RE BACK!
HI, SWEET-UMS!
OH, CUDDLE-KINS, YOU HAD ME SO WORRIED! WHEN I PEEKED IN AND YOU WEREN'T HERE..!
WE WERE JUST BOPPING AROUND THE TIME STREAM, OBSERVING THE PAST! EVERYTHING'S FINE, LOVEY!
FINE?! FINE--?!!
EVERYTHING STINKS! EVERYTHING'S ROTTEN FOR ME--! AND IF EVERYTHING'S ROTTEN FOR ME, NOTHING IS "FINE" FOR ANYONE ELSE!
COME ON, BEYONDER, BE REASONABLE! JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T FOUND FULFILLMENT YET...
HAH! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS FULFILLMENT--! NOT AS LONG AS ANYTHING EXISTS BESIDES ME!
NOW, JUST A MINUTE--! OF COURSE FULFILLMENT IS POSSIBLE..! I'M FULFILLED!

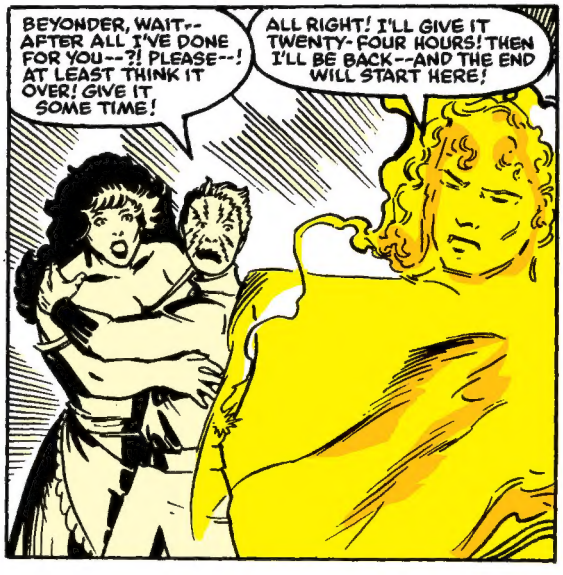

BULL! YOU AND EVERY OTHER CREATURE HERE ARE MERELY PARTS OF THE WHOLE! ALL THINGS NEED OTHER THINGS IN THIS CHAOTIC MULTIVERSE!
NOTHING IS COMPLETE HERE! NO ONE THING IS EVERYTHING -- NOT EVEN ME -- AS LONG AS THERE ARE OTHER THINGS!
OTHER THINGS --! INCOMPLETENESS --! THAT'S THE ROOT OF THIS INSIDIOUS THING, DESIRE, WHICH PLAGUES THIS MULTIVERSE -- AND ME SINCE I LEARNED OF IT!

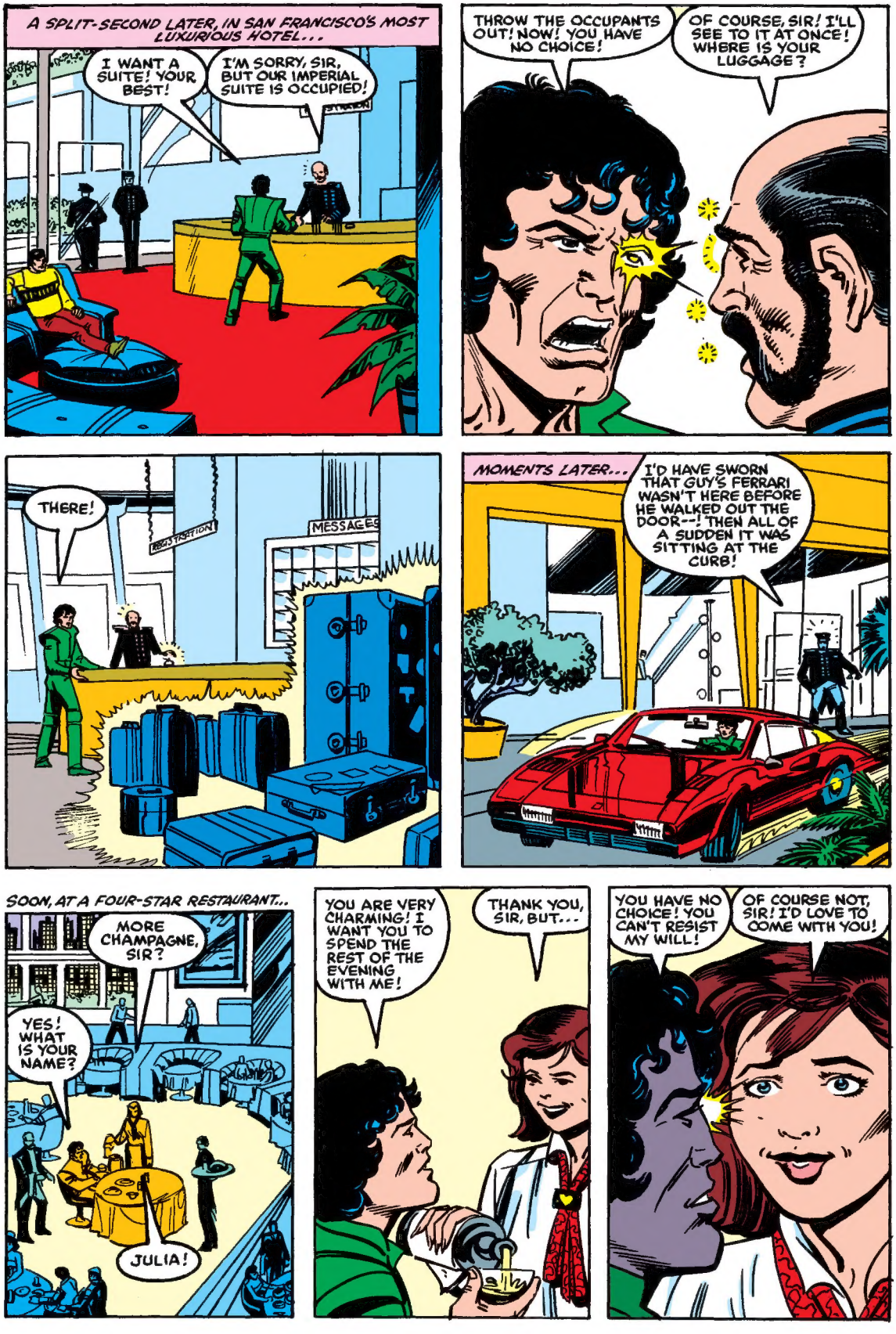
BUT I CAN FIX THAT! I CAN ELIMINATE EVERYTHING BUT ME! THEN, I'LL BE THE ONLY THING --! I'LL BE ALL THERE IS --! COMPLETE, HAPPY, FULFILLED --! JUST LIKE I WAS BACK IN MY OWN REALM BEFORE THE EVENT!
BUT YOU SAID YOU DON'T REMEMBER MUCH FROM BACK THEN! YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T ANYTHING THEN, REALLY! HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU WERE HAPPY?
SHUT UP!
PLEASE --! LISTEN TO ME! I-I THINK THE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU HAVEN'T REALLY TRIED BEING PART OF THE MULTIVERSE!

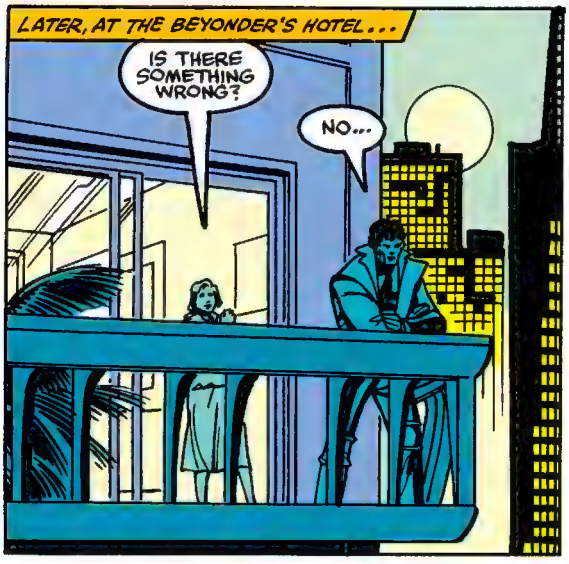

SURE, YOU'VE TAKEN HUMAN-LOOKING FORM, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY HUMAN! YOU'RE SO POWERFUL, SO -- SO INFINITE --! NO WONDER NOTHING MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU!
MAYBE IF YOU LET YOURSELF BECOME MORTAL...
AND THEREFORE VULNERABLE...

SURE! NO FORCE IN EXISTENCE COULD POSSIBLY DESTROY ME WITHOUT MY CONSENT, SO YOU'D HAVE ME VOLUNTARILY ALLOW MYSELF TO HAVE SOME VULNERABILITY...
WHY? SO YOU CAN KILL ME?

NO-O!
HMF! YOU'RE PROBABLY TOO MUCH OF A WIMP TO TRY... BUT YOU ARE AFRAID OF ME --! AFRAID I'LL SNUFF OUT YOU AND YOUR LITTLE FOOL'S PARADISE!
THAT'S WHAT IT IS, TOO! YOU DON'T HAVE FULFILLMENT ANY MORE THAN I DO! YOU'VE GOT A STUPID GAME YOU PLAY, YOU AND THAT COW, WITH WHICH YOU AMUSE YOURSELVES!
WELL, IT'S OVER NOW! I'M GOING TO DESTROY ALL EXISTENCE RIGHT NOW, STARTING WITH YOU!


BEYONDER, WAIT -- AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU --?! PLEASE --! AT LEAST THINK IT OVER! GIVE IT SOME TIME!
ALL RIGHT! I'LL GIVE IT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS! THEN I'LL BE BACK -- AND THE END WILL START HERE!

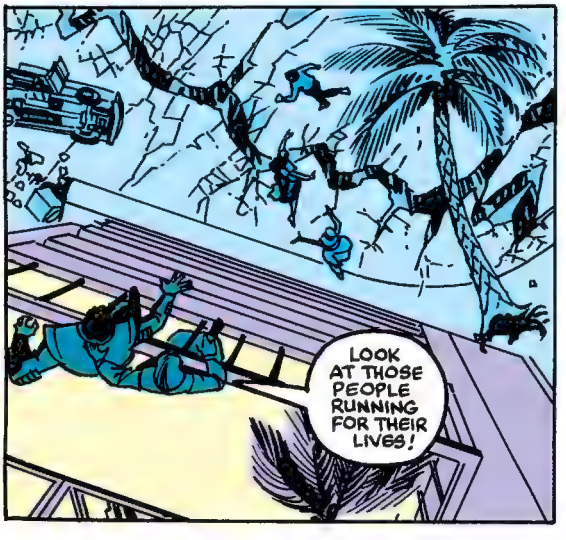

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, IN SAN FRANCISCO'S MOST LUXURIOUS HOTEL...
I WANT A SUITE! YOUR BEST!
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT OUR IMPERIAL SUITE IS OCCUPIED!
REGISTRATION
THROW THE OCCUPANTS OUT! NOW! YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!
OF COURSE, SIR! I'LL SEE TO IT AT ONCE! WHERE IS YOUR LUGGAGE?
THERE!
REGISTRATION
MESSAGES
MOMENTS LATER...
I'D HAVE SWORN THAT GUY'S FERRARI WASN'T HERE BEFORE HE WALKED OUT THE DOOR--! THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN IT WAS SITTING AT THE CURB!
SOON, AT A FOUR-STAR RESTAURANT...
MORE CHAMPAGNE, SIR?
YES! WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
JULIA!
YOU ARE VERY CHARMING! I WANT YOU TO SPEND THE REST OF THE EVENING WITH ME!
THANK YOU, SIR, BUT...
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE! YOU CAN'T RESIST MY WILL!
OF COURSE NOT, SIR! I'D LOVE TO COME WITH YOU!

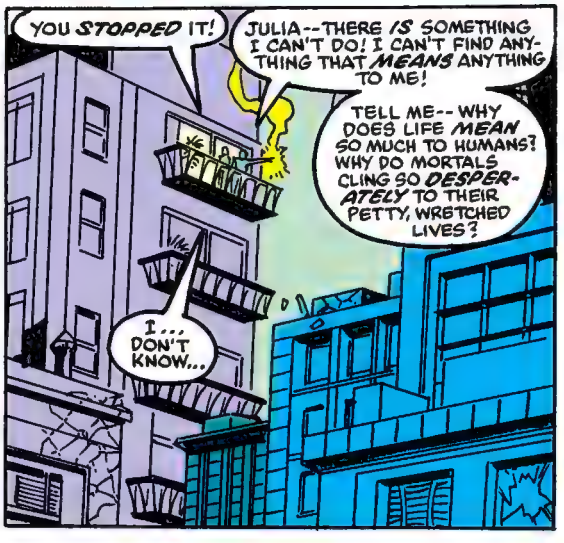

LATER, AT THE BEYONDER'S HOTEL...
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?
NO...

I KNOW I'M NOT PRETTY ENOUGH TO DESERVE YOU...
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU!
ISN'T THERE SOME WAY I CAN COMFORT YOU?
BOY, YOU FELL UNDER MY POWER, HOOK, LINE AND SINKER! I MUST HAVE "ADJUSTED" YOUR MIND MORE THAN I THOUGHT!

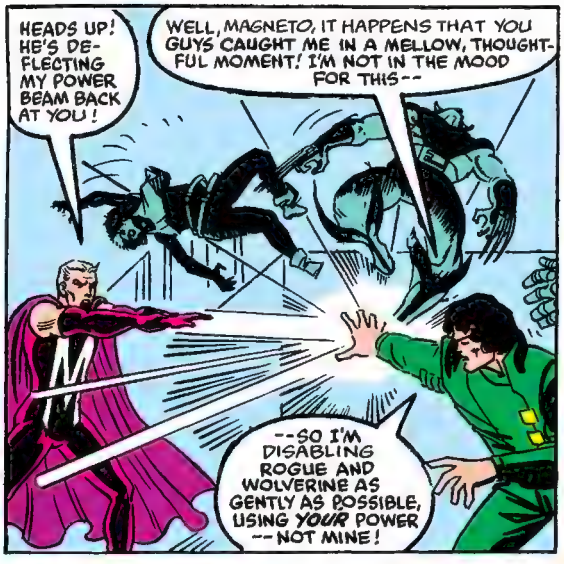
I'M YOURS COMPLETELY! I DON'T KNOW WHY! I DON'T CARE!
EVERYTHING IS MINE IF I CHOOSE! AND WHATEVER DOESN'T PLEASE ME IS HISTORY!

THIS CITY FOR EXAMPLE...
RRRRUMBLE!
AN EARTH-QUAKE!
WOW! I BET THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO!


LOOK AT THOSE PEOPLE RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES!


YOU STOPPED IT!
JULIA--THERE IS SOMETHING I CAN'T DO! I CAN'T FIND ANY-THING THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO ME!
TELL ME-- WHY DOES LIFE MEAN SO MUCH TO HUMANS? WHY DO MORTALS CLING SO DESPER-ATELY TO THEIR PETTY, WRETCHED LIVES?
I... DON'T KNOW...

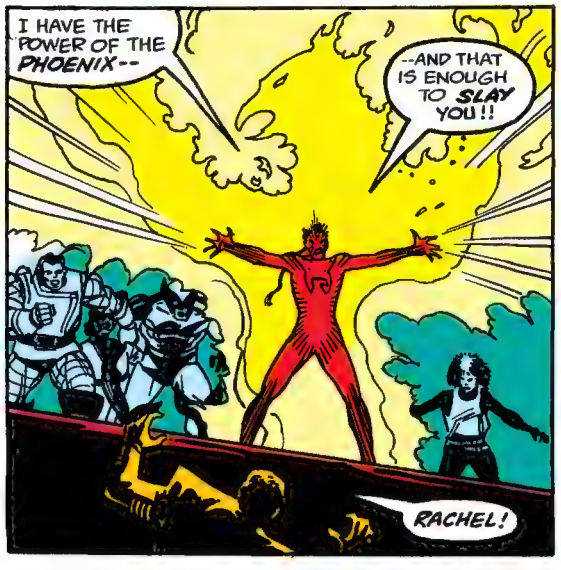
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE LIFE'S SO SHORT! EVERY MOMENT'S PRECIOUS... YOU KNOW!
NO, I DON'T--! AND I'M GETTING SICK OF HEARING ABOUT THE SUPPOSED VALUE OF MORTALITY! IT MAKES ME ANGRY!
B-BUT, ALL I SAID WAS...
SHUT UP!
IF DEATH HOLDS SUCH FASCINATION FOR YOU, THEN HERE--! LET ME HASTEN YOURS!
OH-H-H!
I--I'M BACK THE WAY I WAS! OH, THANK YOU--!
DON'T MENTION IT! ALL YOU DID WAS ANSWER ME! BESIDES, YOUR END, AND THE REST OF CREATION'S, WILL COME SOON ENOUGH! YOU MIGHT AS WELL HAVE THOSE LAST FEW HOURS... SINCE THEY'RE SO "PRECIOUS" TO YOU!
YOU'D BETTER GO NOW!
YES, BUT-- I'D RATHER STAY! PLEASE..?
NO! I SENSE TROUBLE ON THE WAY! GO!
SECONDS LATER...
NO SENSE LETTING THEM MESS UP MY ROOMS...
SUDDENLY...
GET HIM, X-MEN!
OH, FOR PETE'S SAKE--! GET REAL!


HEADS UP! HE'S DEFLECTING MY POWER BEAM BACK AT YOU!
WELL, MAGNETO, IT HAPPENS THAT YOU GUYS CAUGHT ME IN A MELLOW, THOUGHTFUL MOMENT! I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR THIS--
--SO I'M DISABLING ROGUE AND WOLVERINE AS GENTLY AS POSSIBLE, USING YOUR POWER --NOT MINE!

SEIZE HIM COLOSSUS!
DA, MAGNETO!
SHADOWCAT! DON'T TOUCH THE BEYONDER--BUT RENDER COLOSSUS IMMATERIAL AT THE FIRST SIGN OF EFFECTIVE COUNTER-ATTACK!
CAN'T I EVEN PULL HIS HAIR? RATS!

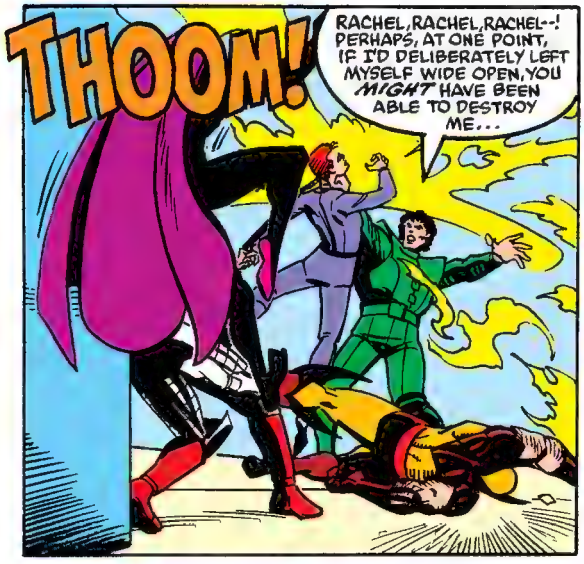
WHAT--?
I SIMPLY DUPLICATED YOUR OWN MAGNETIC FIELD, MAGNETO, REPELLING YOU! AND I FORCED THE OTHER TWO INTO PHANTOM FORM! I'M REALLY NOT INTO THIS RIGHT NOW!

YOUR EXISTENCES WILL BE EXPUNGED TOMORROW! WHY RUSH IT?
YOU'LL MURDER NO ONE!


I HAVE THE POWER OF THE PHOENIX--
--AND THAT IS ENOUGH TO SLAY YOU!!
RACHEL!

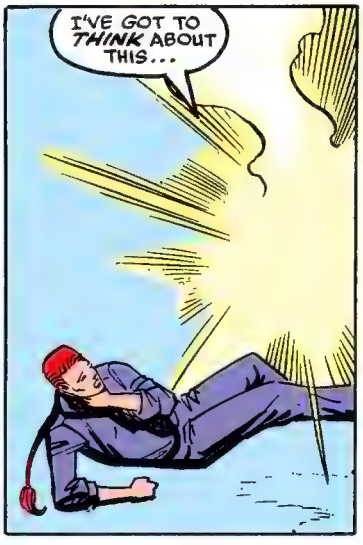
RACHEL NO LONGER, MONSTER! NOW AND FOREVER, I AM PHOENIX!
AND I AM YOUR DEATH!

THABOOM


THOOM!
RACHEL, RACHEL, RACHEL--! PERHAPS, AT ONE POINT, IF I'D DELIBERATELY LEFT MYSELF WIDE OPEN, YOU *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DESTROY ME...

...BUT, THE TRUTH IS, YOU NEVER *REALLY* HAD A CHANCE!
YOU'RE SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT! SO WHY THIS KAMIKAZE RUN?
YOU... FORCED THIS CONFRONTATION -- COMING HERE... ATTACKING THE CITY..!

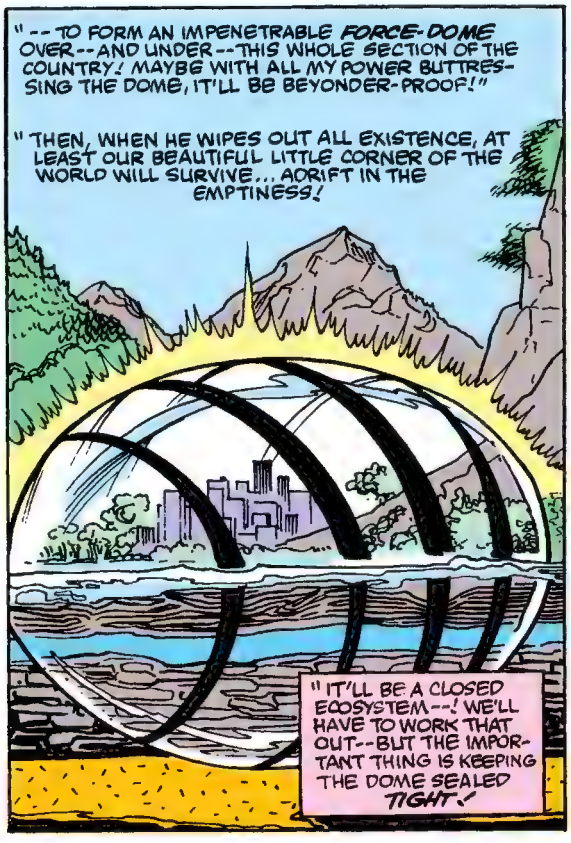
YOU KNEW... THIS PLACE... THIS CITY... WAS UNDER OUR PROTECTION...
GOOD GRIEF! I--I *DID*, DIDN'T I?

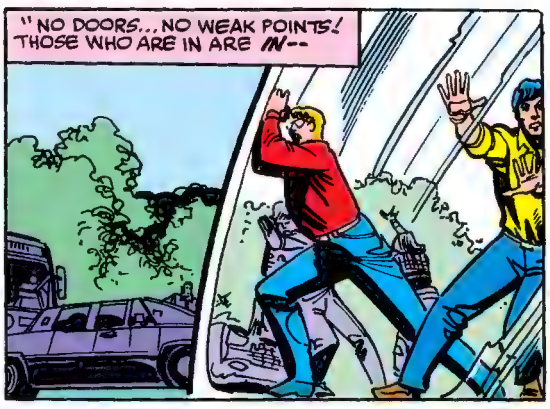

I'VE GOT TO *THINK* ABOUT THIS...

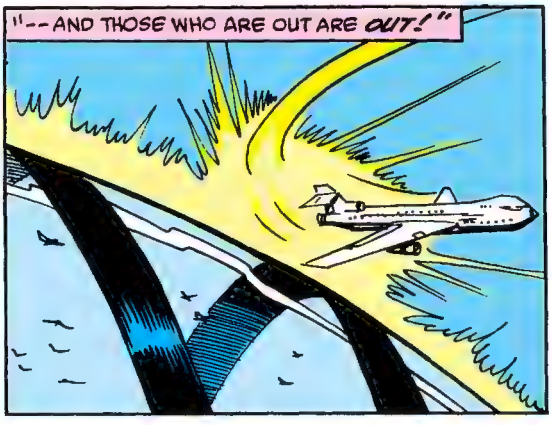
MEANWHILE, NEAR DENVER...
OH, *NO!*
MARSHA! HE'S LEAVING SAN FRANCISCO--!

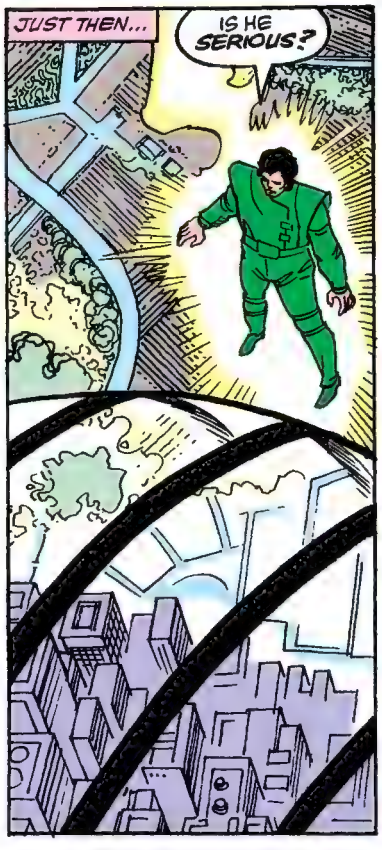
WH-WHAT IF HE'S ON HIS WAY *HERE*!?
OWIE, DARLING, DON'T PANIC!

THERE MUST BE *SOMETHING* WE CAN DO!
M-MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT! I CAN'T *MATCH* THE BEYONDER'S POWER--BUT MAYBE I CAN STILL PROTECT US FROM IT!
I'LL USE EVERY BIT OF ENERGY I CAN MUSTER--


"--TO FORM AN IMPENETRABLE FORCE-DOME OVER--AND UNDER--THIS WHOLE SECTION OF THE COUNTRY! MAYBE WITH ALL MY POWER BUTTRESSING THE DOME, IT'LL BE BEYONDER-PROOF!"
"THEN, WHEN HE WIPES OUT ALL EXISTENCE, AT LEAST OUR BEAUTIFUL LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD WILL SURVIVE... ADRIFT IN THE EMPTINESS!
"IT'LL BE A CLOSED ECOSYSTEM--! WE'LL HAVE TO WORK THAT OUT--BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS KEEPING THE DOME SEALED TIGHT!"

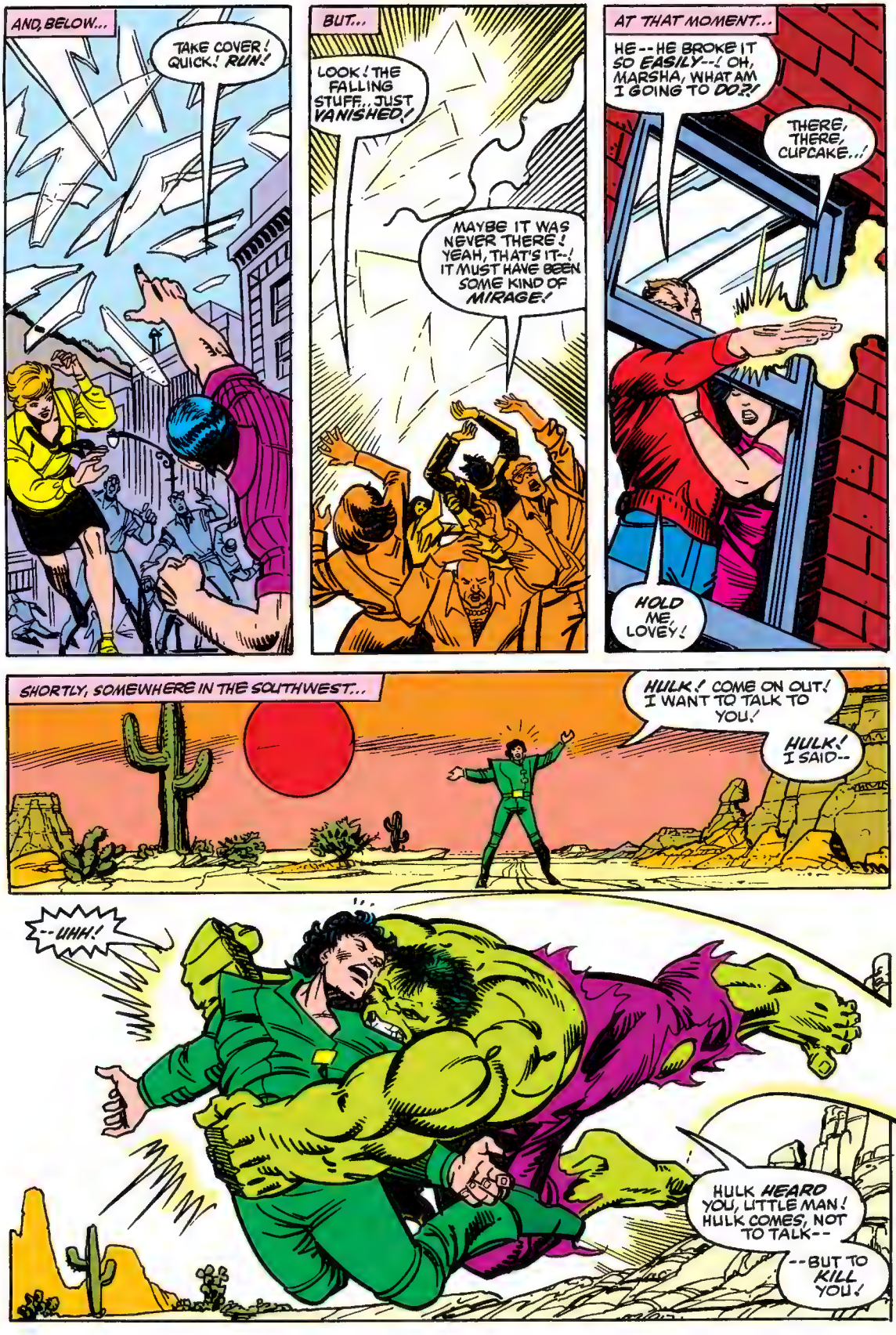

"NO DOORS... NO WEAK POINTS! THOSE WHO ARE IN ARE IN--

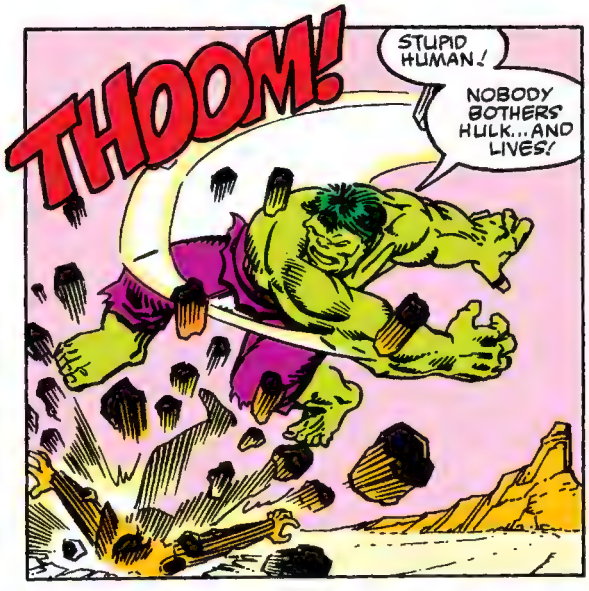

"--AND THOSE WHO ARE OUT ARE OUT!"

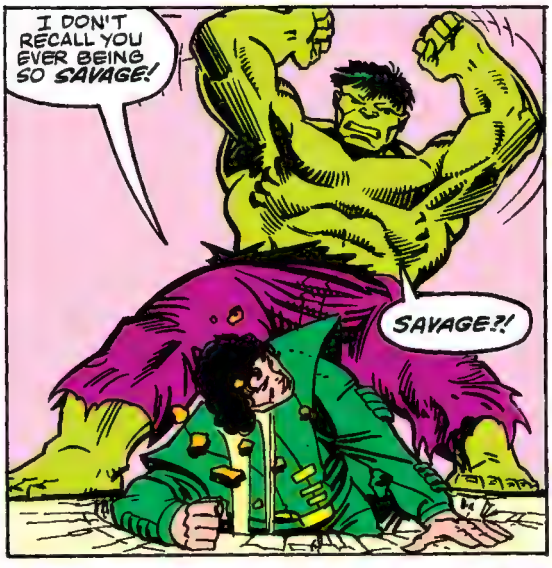

JUST THEN...
IS HE SERIOUS?

HA! I'M GLAD I HAPPENED TO BE PASSING THIS WAY! WHAT A LAUGH!

SORRY TO "BURST YOUR BUBBLE," OWIE, BUT IF I WANT IN, NOTHING CAN STOP ME--
KRAKKOOM!
--AND YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW IT NOW!

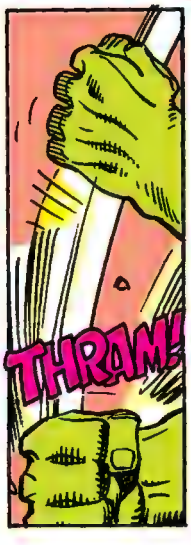

AND, BELOW...
TAKE COVER! QUICK! RUN!
BUT...
LOOK! THE FALLING STUFF... JUST VANISHED!
MAYBE IT WAS NEVER THERE! YEAH, THAT'S IT--! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME KIND OF MIRAGE!
AT THAT MOMENT...
HE--HE BROKE IT SO EASILY--! OH, MARSHA, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!
THERE, THERE, CUPCAKE...!
HOLD ME, LOVEY!
SHORTLY, SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST...
HULK! COME ON OUT! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!
HULK! I SAID--
--UHH!
HULK HEARD YOU, LITTLE MAN! HULK COMES, NOT TO TALK--
--BUT TO KILL YOU!


THOOM!
STUPID HUMAN!
NOBODY BOTHERS HULK...AND LIVES!


I DON'T RECALL YOU EVER BEING SO SAVAGE!
SAVAGE?!

HAH!!
WHBOOM!

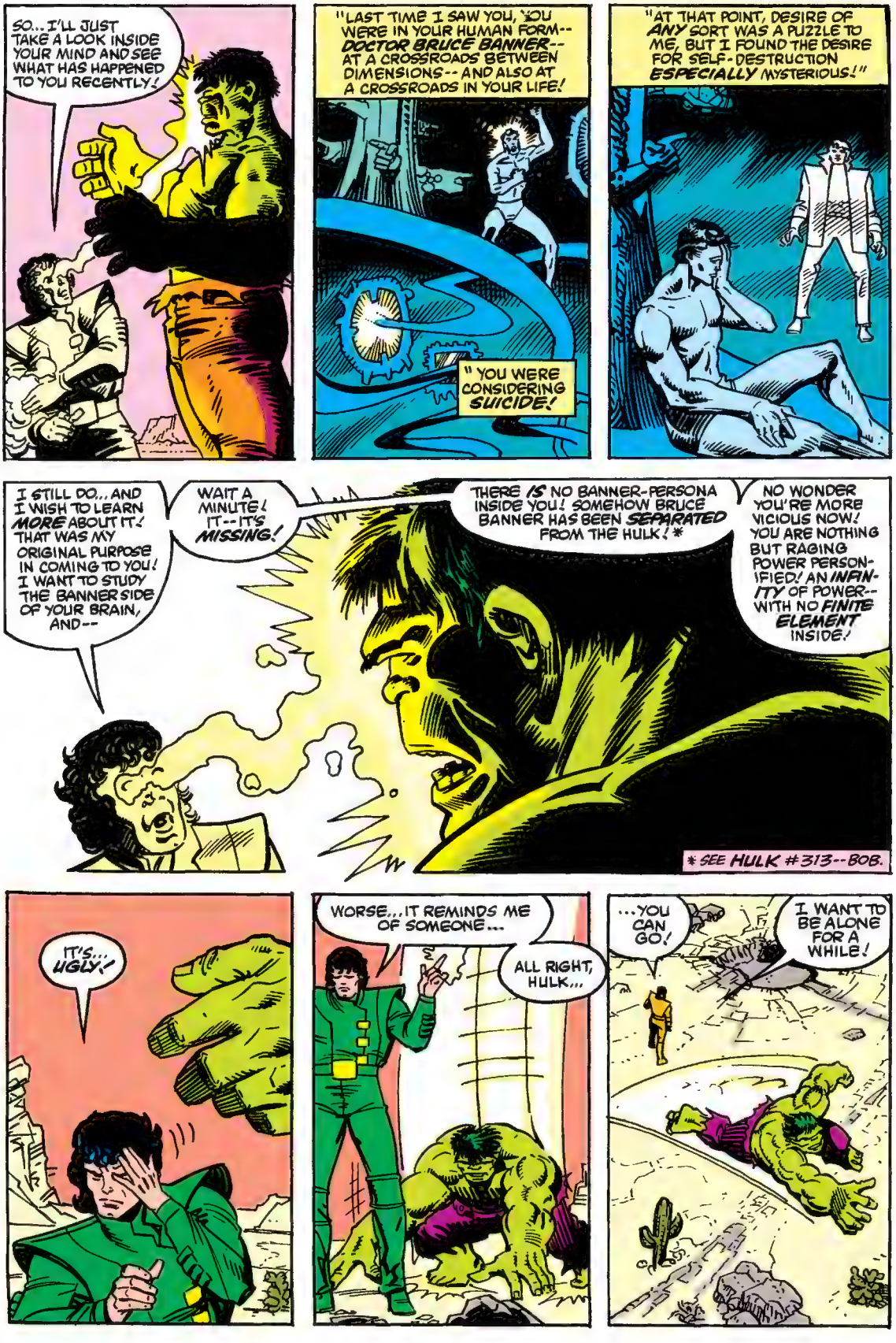
IS THIS SAVAGE?!
WRAM!
BDAM!

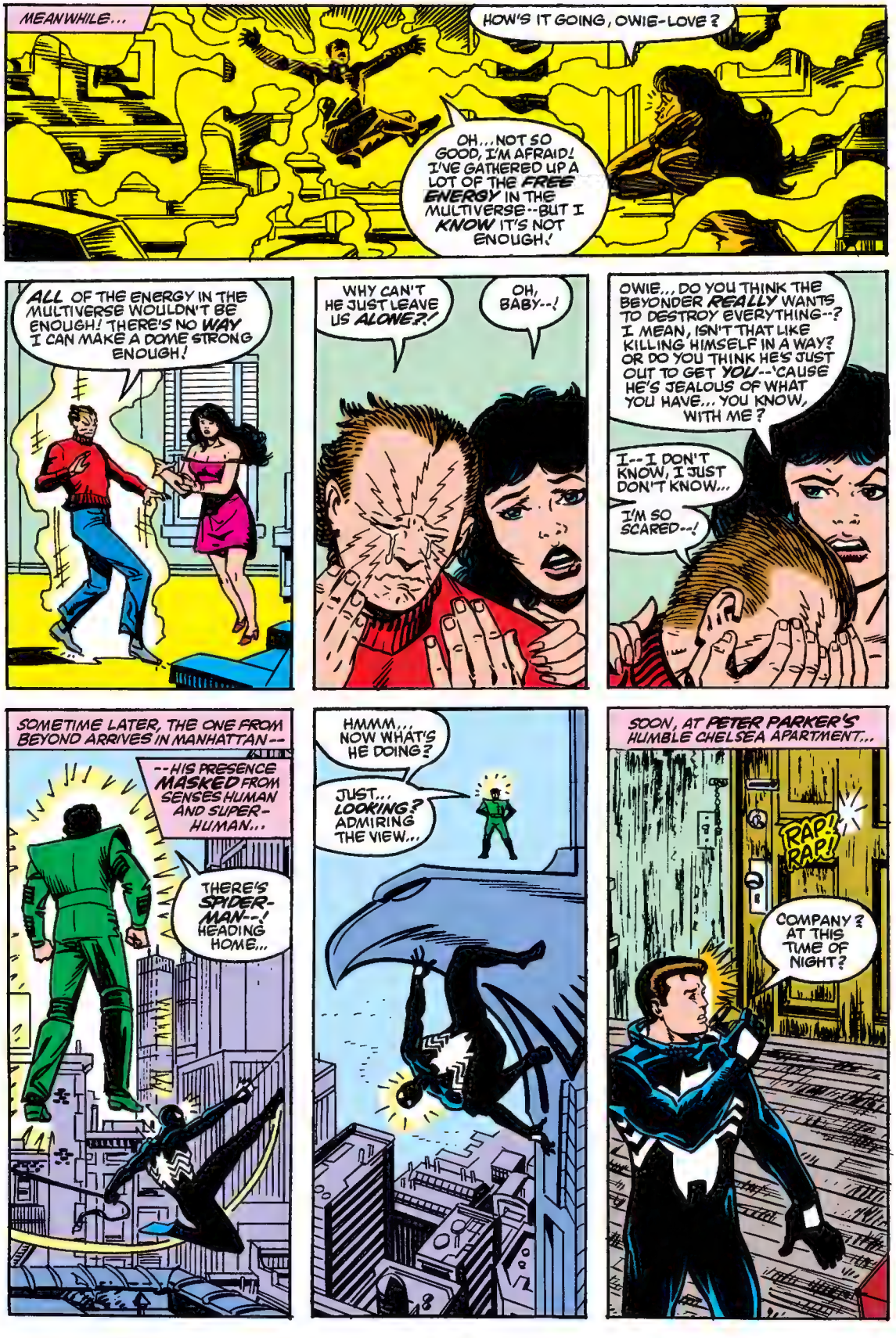

THRAM!

WRAK!

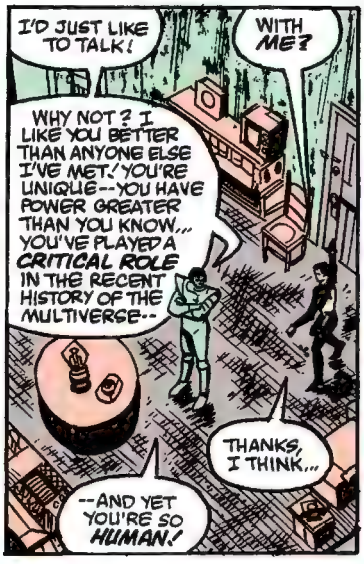
OKAY, HOLD IT!

HUH?
ENOUGH, ALREADY! I'M CONVINCED THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN MORE VICIOUS--
--AND I'M CURIOUS TO FIND OUT WHY!


SO... I'LL JUST TAKE A LOOK INSIDE YOUR MIND AND SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU RECENTLY!
"LAST TIME I SAW YOU, YOU WERE IN YOUR HUMAN FORM-- DOCTOR BRUCE BANNER-- AT A CROSSROADS BETWEEN DIMENSIONS-- AND ALSO AT A CROSSROADS IN YOUR LIFE!
" YOU WERE CONSIDERING SUICIDE!
"AT THAT POINT, DESIRE OF ANY SORT WAS A PUZZLE TO ME, BUT I FOUND THE DESIRE FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION ESPECIALLY MYSTERIOUS!"
I STILL DO... AND I WISH TO LEARN MORE ABOUT IT! THAT WAS MY ORIGINAL PURPOSE IN COMING TO YOU! I WANT TO STUDY THE BANNER SIDE OF YOUR BRAIN, AND--
WAIT A MINUTE! IT--IT'S MISSING!
THERE IS NO BANNER-PERSONA INSIDE YOU! SOMEHOW BRUCE BANNER HAS BEEN SEPARATED FROM THE HULK! *
NO WONDER YOU'RE MORE VICIOUS NOW! YOU ARE NOTHING BUT RAGING POWER PERSONIFIED! AN INFINITY OF POWER-- WITH NO FINITE ELEMENT INSIDE!
* SEE HULK #313--BOB.
IT'S... UGLY!
WORSE... IT REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE...
ALL RIGHT, HULK...
...YOU CAN GO!
I WANT TO BE ALONE FOR A WHILE!


MEANWHILE...
HOW'S IT GOING, OWIE-LOVE?
OH...NOT SO GOOD, I'M AFRAID! I'VE GATHERED UP A LOT OF THE FREE ENERGY IN THE MULTIVERSE--BUT I KNOW IT'S NOT ENOUGH!
ALL OF THE ENERGY IN THE MULTIVERSE WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH! THERE'S NO WAY I CAN MAKE A DOME STRONG ENOUGH!
WHY CAN'T HE JUST LEAVE US ALONE?!
OH, BABY--!
OWIE... DO YOU THINK THE BEYONDER REALLY WANTS TO DESTROY EVERYTHING--? I MEAN, ISN'T THAT LIKE KILLING HIMSELF IN A WAY? OR DO YOU THINK HE'S JUST OUT TO GET YOU--'CAUSE HE'S JEALOUS OF WHAT YOU HAVE... YOU KNOW, WITH ME?
I--I DON'T KNOW, I JUST DON'T KNOW...
I'M SO SCARED--!
SOMETIME LATER, THE ONE FROM BEYOND ARRIVES IN MANHATTAN--
--HIS PRESENCE MASKED FROM SENSES HUMAN AND SUPER-HUMAN...
THERE'S SPIDER-MAN--! HEADING HOME...
HMMM... NOW WHAT'S HE DOING?
JUST... LOOKING? ADMIRING THE VIEW...
SOON, AT PETER PARKER'S HUMBLE CHELSEA APARTMENT...
RAP! RAP!
COMPANY? AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

BEYONDER! UH... LONG TIME NO SEE!
C-C'MON IN!
SORRY, UM... I CAN'T LET YOU USE MY BATH-ROOM * THIS TIME...
THAT'S NOT WHY I CAME HERE.
* PETER PARKER'S APARTMENT WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN WEB OF SPIDER-MAN # 11.


I'D JUST LIKE TO TALK!
WITH ME?
WHY NOT? I LIKE YOU BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE I'VE MET. YOU'RE UNIQUE--YOU HAVE POWER GREATER THAN YOU KNOW... YOU'VE PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE MULTIVERSE--
THANKS, I THINK...
--AND YET YOU'RE SO HUMAN!

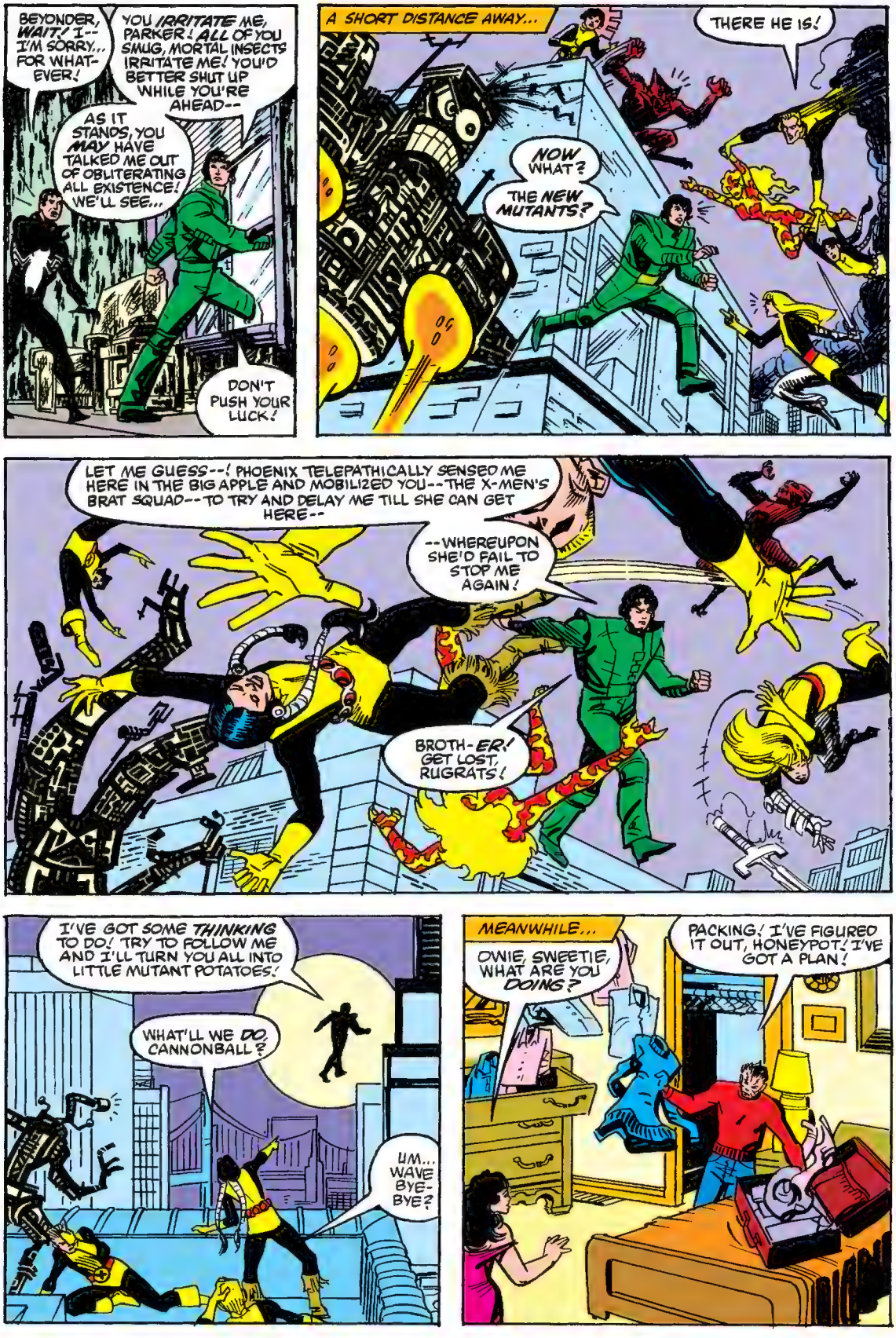
I OBSERVE BOTH A PASSION FOR LIFE AND A FASCINATION WITH DEATH AMONG MORTALS! EXPLAIN!
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN! BUT I DO KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN...

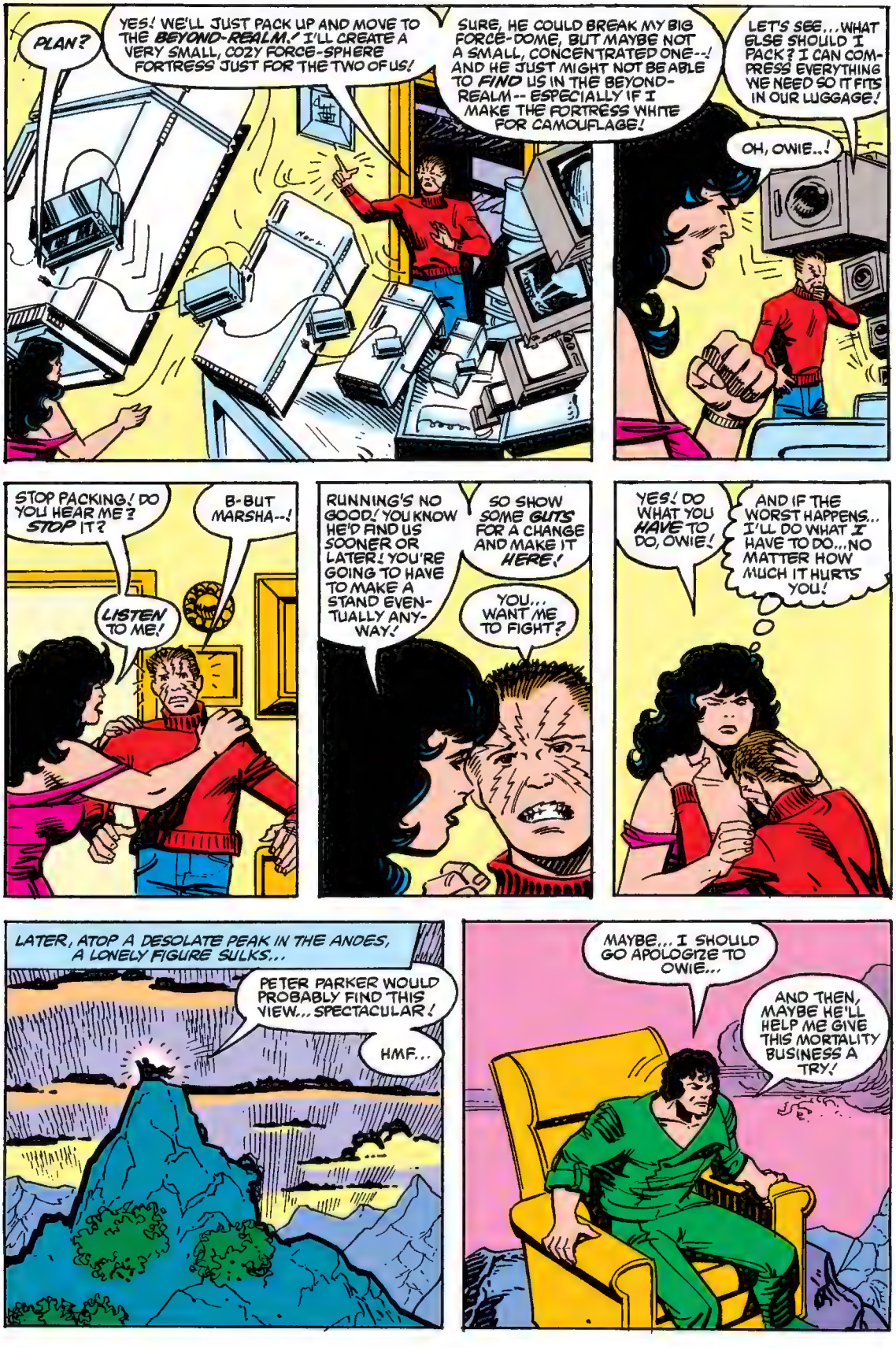
"NOT LONG AGO, I JUST HAPPENED TO BE SWINGING BY--PURE DUMB LUCK--JUST AS SOME GUY WAS TRYING TO END IT ALL...

"AS I REACHED OUT TO CATCH HIM HE REACHED BACK--!
"I MEAN, ISN'T THAT... WEIRD? RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF COMMITTING SUICIDE, THERE HE WAS, GRABBING ONTO MY HAND AND HOLDING ON FOR DEAR LIFE!"

BUT, I KNOW EXACTLY HOW HE FELT! WHEN THE END IS RUSHING TOWARD YOU--THAT'S WHEN YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE ALIVE, AND--WELL, YOU SEE, THAT TYPE OF SITUATION COMES UP A LOT IN MY LINE OF WORK...
CONFRONTING MORTALITY...?
ACTUALLY, EVERYBODY DOES IT EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY. IN THIS WORLD, YOU NEVER KNOW--! THE CLOCK IS RUNNING ON EVERYONE--IT'S JUST THAT PEOPLE LIKE ME, SKYDIVERS AND JAYWALKERS--WE'RE EXTREME CASES!

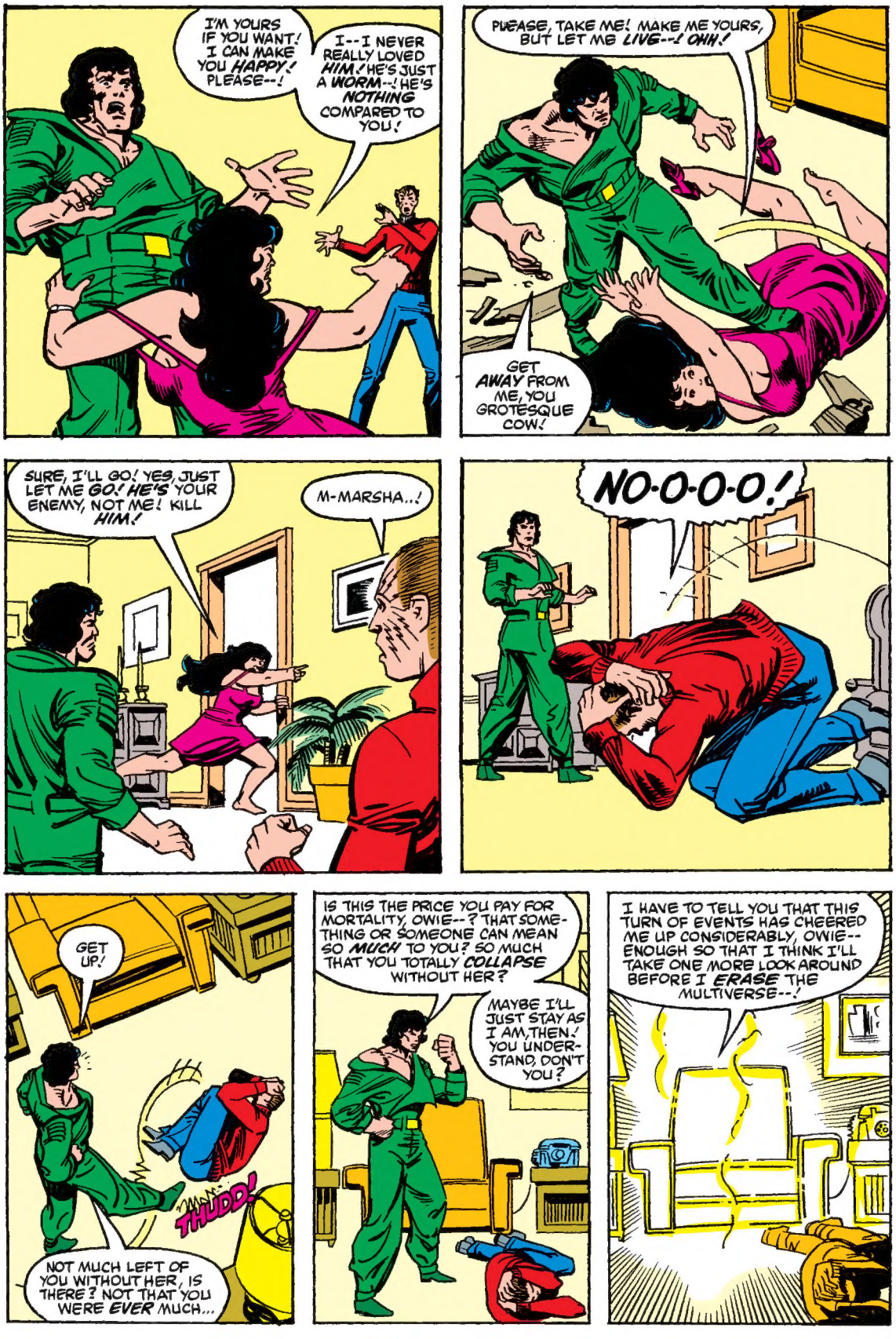
SO, AGAIN I HEAR THIS--THAT ALL HUMAN ENDEAVOR... ALL HUMAN EXISTENCE IS LENT MEANING BY THE FINITENESS OF LIFE...
I, UH, GUESS... YEAH... EVERY MOMENT IS SPECIAL BECAUSE THERE AREN'T MANY--AND THEY WHIZ RIGHT BY... AND THEY REALLY GET INTENSE WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE RUNNING OUT!
UH... DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG? YOU LOOK ANGRY!

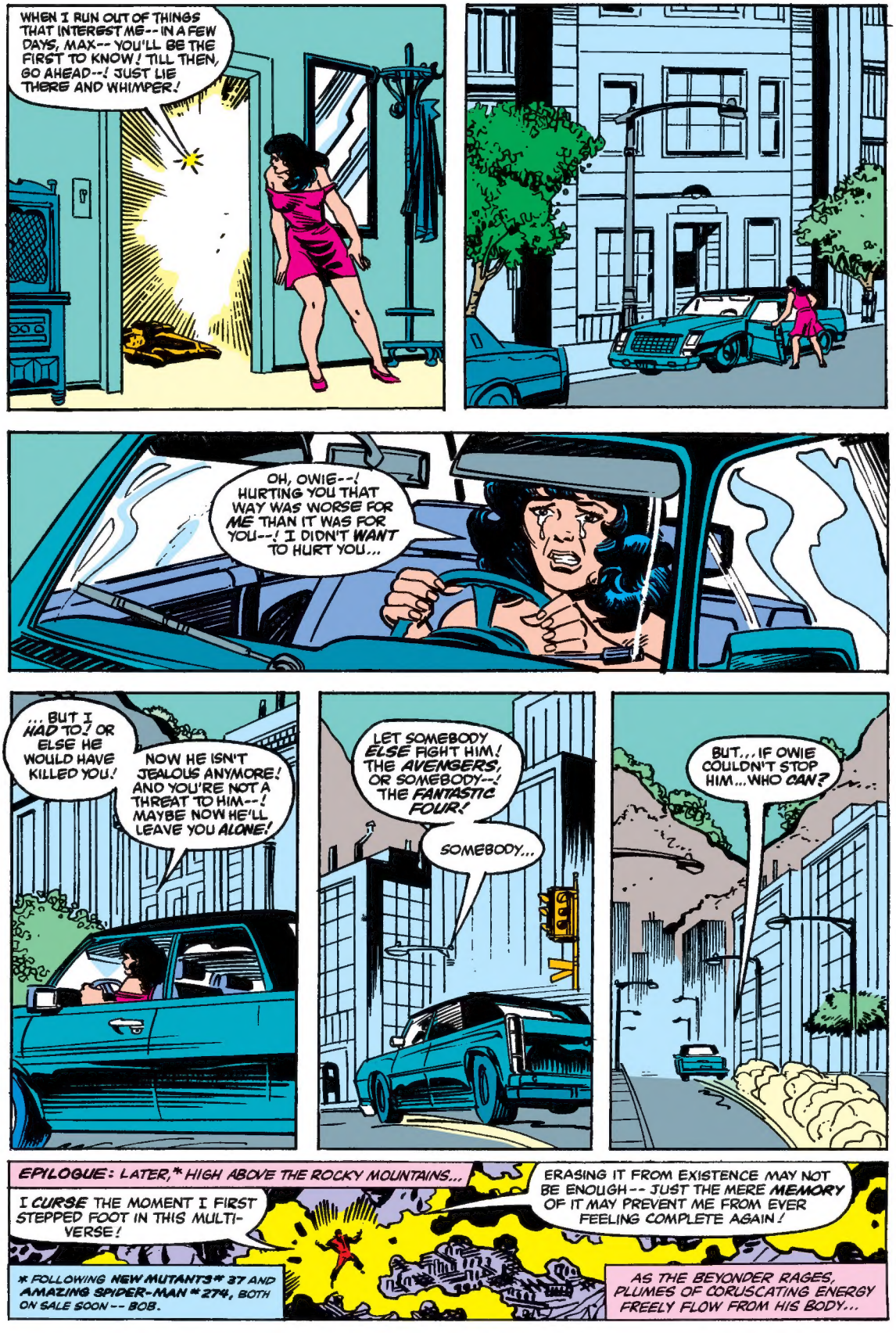

BEYONDER, WAIT! I-- I'M SORRY... FOR WHAT-EVER!
YOU IRRITATE ME, PARKER! ALL OF YOU SMUG, MORTAL INSECTS IRRITATE ME! YOU'D BETTER SHUT UP WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD--
AS IT STANDS, YOU MAY HAVE TALKED ME OUT OF OBLITERATING ALL EXISTENCE! WE'LL SEE...
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK!
A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY...
THERE HE IS!
NOW WHAT?
THE NEW MUTANTS?
LET ME GUESS--! PHOENIX TELEPATHICALLY SENSED ME HERE IN THE BIG APPLE AND MOBILIZED YOU--THE X-MEN'S BRAT SQUAD--TO TRY AND DELAY ME TILL SHE CAN GET HERE--
--WHEREUPON SHE'D FAIL TO STOP ME AGAIN!
BROTH-ER! GET LOST, RUGRATS!
I'VE GOT SOME THINKING TO DO! TRY TO FOLLOW ME AND I'LL TURN YOU ALL INTO LITTLE MUTANT POTATOES!
WHAT'LL WE DO, CANNONBALL?
UM... WAVE BYE-BYE?
MEANWHILE...
OWIE, SWEETIE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PACKING! I'VE FIGURED IT OUT, HONEYPOT! I'VE GOT A PLAN!

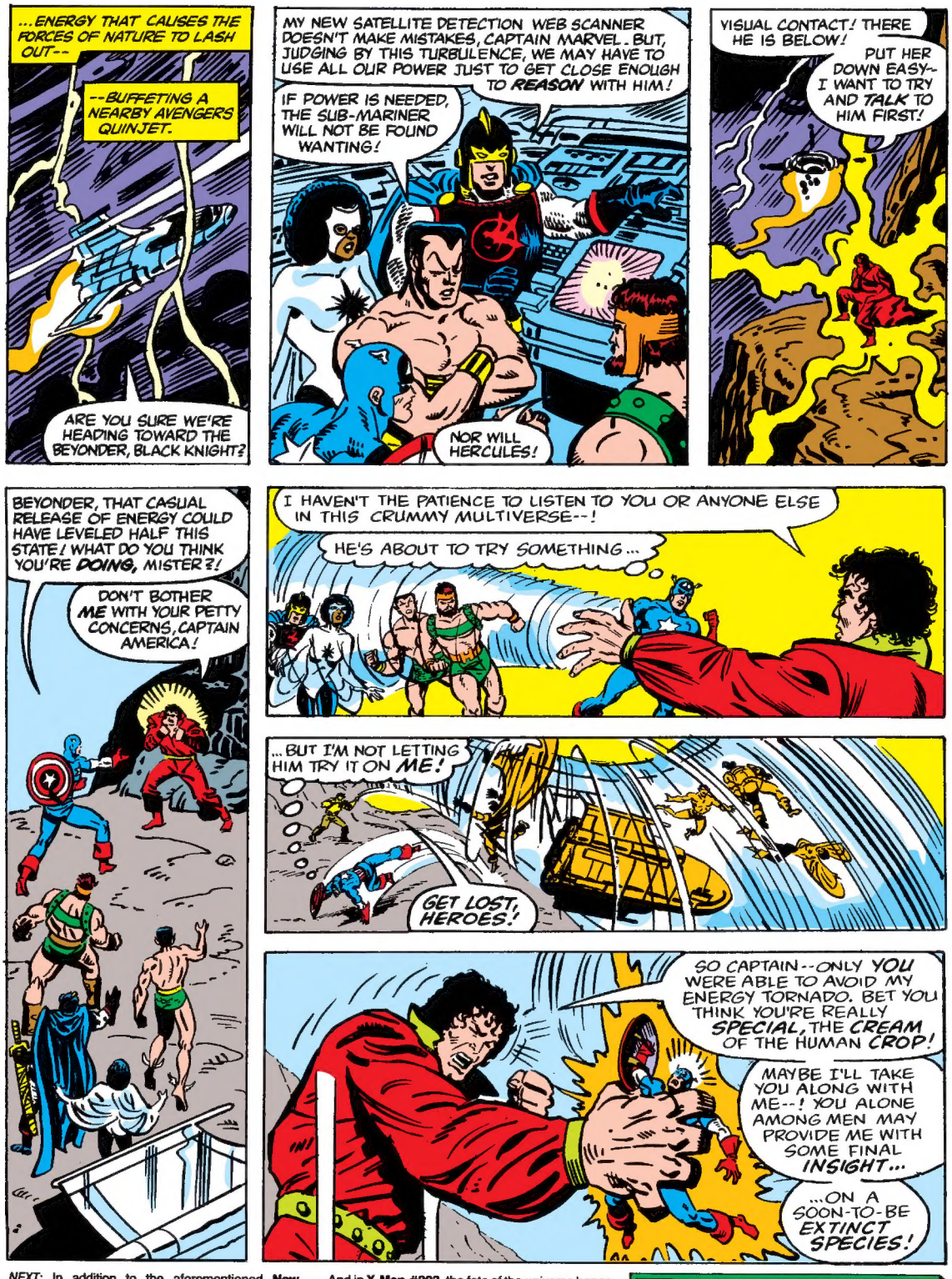

PLAN?
YES! WE'LL JUST PACK UP AND MOVE TO THE BEYOND-REALM.! I'LL CREATE A VERY SMALL, COZY FORCE-SPHERE FORTRESS JUST FOR THE TWO OF US!
SURE, HE COULD BREAK MY BIG FORCE-DOME, BUT MAYBE NOT A SMALL, CONCENTRATED ONE--! AND HE JUST MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO FIND US IN THE BEYOND-REALM-- ESPECIALLY IF I MAKE THE FORTRESS WHITE FOR CAMOUFLAGE!
LET'S SEE...WHAT ELSE SHOULD I PACK? I CAN COMPRESS EVERYTHING WE NEED SO IT FITS IN OUR LUGGAGE!
OH, OWIE..!
STOP PACKING! DO YOU HEAR ME? STOP IT?
B-BUT MARSHA--!
LISTEN TO ME!
RUNNING'S NO GOOD! YOU KNOW HE'D FIND US SOONER OR LATER! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE A STAND EVENTUALLY ANYWAY!
SO SHOW SOME GUTS FOR A CHANGE AND MAKE IT HERE!
YOU... WANT ME TO FIGHT?
YES! DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, OWIE!
AND IF THE WORST HAPPENS... I'LL DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO...NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS YOU!
LATER, ATOP A DESOLATE PEAK IN THE ANDES, A LONELY FIGURE SULKS...
PETER PARKER WOULD PROBABLY FIND THIS VIEW... SPECTACULAR!
HMF...
MAYBE... I SHOULD GO APOLOGIZE TO OWIE...
AND THEN, MAYBE HE'LL HELP ME GIVE THIS MORTALITY BUSINESS A TRY!

AND, AT OWIE AND MARSHA'S...
S-SEVEN-FORTY-NINE... HE'S DUE ANY MINUTE NOW!
HE'S EXPECTING TO FIND A MAMA'S BOY, OWIE--NOT SOMEONE WHO WILL FIGHT BACK! REMEMBER THAT!
7:49
JUST-- JUST STAY CLOSE TO ME, MARSHA! PLEASE--!
I--I WILL...
SEVEN-FIFTY-THREE...
SUDDENLY...
HELLO, OWEN!
BEYONDER!
ZZRACK!
GNNGH!
OWW!
AGAIN, OWIE! HARDER!
WAIT A MINUTE, JERK! I CAME TO...
DIE!

SHRAKK!
I WON'T LET YOU HURT US! I'LL KILL YOU!
SHRKOOM!
DIE, YOU MONSTER!
NOT BAD... KOFF NICE TRY! THAT LAST SHOT COULD'VE SLAGGED SEVERAL BILLION ENTIRE DIMENSIONS!
I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR SHOWING YOUR TRUE COLORS RIGHT WHEN I WALKED IN! IF YOU HADN'T, I MIGHT HAVE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE!
AND IF I HAD, YOU WOULD HAVE SHOWN ME AS MUCH... HUMANITY... AS I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU!
NO! WAIT! PLEASE!
MARSHA--!
KILL HIM IF YOU WANT, BUT NOT ME--! PLEASE!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I--I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU! ANYTHING! I BEG YOU!
MARSHA... NO!


I'M YOURS IF YOU WANT! I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY! PLEASE--!
I--I NEVER REALLY LOVED HIM! HE'S JUST A WORM--! HE'S NOTHING COMPARED TO YOU!
PLEASE, TAKE ME! MAKE ME YOURS, BUT LET ME LIVE--! OHH!
GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU GROTESQUE COW!
SURE, I'LL GO! YES, JUST LET ME GO! HE'S YOUR ENEMY, NOT ME! KILL HIM!
M-MARSHA...!
NO-O-O-O-O!
GET UP!
THUDD!
NOT MUCH LEFT OF YOU WITHOUT HER, IS THERE? NOT THAT YOU WERE EVER MUCH...
IS THIS THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR MORTALITY, OWIE--? THAT SOMETHING OR SOMEONE CAN MEAN SO MUCH TO YOU? SO MUCH THAT YOU TOTALLY COLLAPSE WITHOUT HER?
MAYBE I'LL JUST STAY AS I AM, THEN! YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THIS TURN OF EVENTS HAS CHEERED ME UP CONSIDERABLY, OWIE--ENOUGH SO THAT I THINK I'LL TAKE ONE MORE LOOK AROUND BEFORE I ERASE THE MULTIVERSE--!


WHEN I RUN OUT OF THINGS THAT INTEREST ME--IN A FEW DAYS, MAX--YOU'LL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW! TILL THEN, GO AHEAD--! JUST LIE THERE AND WHIMPER!
OH, OWIE--! HURTING YOU THAT WAY WAS WORSE FOR ME THAN IT WAS FOR YOU--! I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT YOU...
... BUT I HAD TO! OR ELSE HE WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU!
NOW HE ISN'T JEALOUS ANYMORE! AND YOU'RE NOT A THREAT TO HIM--! MAYBE NOW HE'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE!
LET SOMEBODY ELSE FIGHT HIM! THE AVENGERS, OR SOMEBODY--! THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
SOMEBODY...
BUT... IF OWIE COULDN'T STOP HIM... WHO CAN?
EPILOGUE: LATER,* HIGH ABOVE THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS...
I CURSE THE MOMENT I FIRST STEPPED FOOT IN THIS MULTI-VERSE!
ERASING IT FROM EXISTENCE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH-- JUST THE MERE MEMORY OF IT MAY PREVENT ME FROM EVER FEELING COMPLETE AGAIN!
* FOLLOWING NEW MUTANTS # 37 AND AMAZING SPIDER-MAN # 274, BOTH ON SALE SOON-- BOB.
AS THE BEYONDER RAGES, PLUMES OF CORUSCATING ENERGY FREELY FLOW FROM HIS BODY...


...ENERGY THAT CAUSES THE FORCES OF NATURE TO LASH OUT--
--BUFFETING A NEARBY AVENGERS QUINJET.
ARE YOU SURE WE'RE HEADING TOWARD THE BEYONDER, BLACK KNIGHT?
MY NEW SATELLITE DETECTION WEB SCANNER DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES, CAPTAIN MARVEL. BUT, JUDGING BY THIS TURBULENCE, WE MAY HAVE TO USE ALL OUR POWER JUST TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO REASON WITH HIM!
IF POWER IS NEEDED, THE SUB-MARINER WILL NOT BE FOUND WANTING!
NOR WILL HERCULES!
VISUAL CONTACT! THERE HE IS BELOW!
PUT HER DOWN EASY-- I WANT TO TRY AND TALK TO HIM FIRST!
BEYONDER, THAT CASUAL RELEASE OF ENERGY COULD HAVE LEVELED HALF THIS STATE! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, MISTER?!
DON'T BOTHER ME WITH YOUR PETTY CONCERNS, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
I HAVEN'T THE PATIENCE TO LISTEN TO YOU OR ANYONE ELSE IN THIS CRUMMY MULTIVERSE--!
HE'S ABOUT TO TRY SOMETHING...
...BUT I'M NOT LETTING HIM TRY IT ON ME!
GET LOST, HEROES!
SO CAPTAIN--ONLY YOU WERE ABLE TO AVOID MY ENERGY TORNADO. BET YOU THINK YOU'RE REALLY SPECIAL, THE CREAM OF THE HUMAN CROP!
MAYBE I'LL TAKE YOU ALONG WITH ME--! YOU ALONE AMONG MEN MAY PROVIDE ME WITH SOME FINAL INSIGHT...
...ON A SOON-TO-BE EXTINCT SPECIES!

NEXT: In addition to the aforementioned **New Mutants #37** (wherein the Beyonder sets out to *destroy* the New Mutants) and **Amazing Spider-Man #274** (perhaps the web-slinger's greatest story ever, in which he's caught in a struggle of truly *cosmic* proportions), our tale continues . . .

. . . in **Avengers #256**, in which the mighty *Avengers* go into all-out action against the *Beyonder* to save *Captain America's* life!

And in **X-Men #203**, the fate of the *universe* hangs in the balance as *Phoenix* battles the *Beyonder!*

And, **Fantastic Four #288 reveals at last how** *Doctor Doom* was alive and present for the first *Secret Wars*, and also, what became of him! A must-buy issue!

One month from now, in **Secret Wars II #9**, our epic tale *concludes* in spectacular fashion! Be here for . . .

GOD IN MAN, MAN IN GOD!

MINUTEMEN
Blutman